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**Senate investigators eye key role of U.S.
 spymasters in Iran-contras arms scandal**



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WASHINGTON

Senate investigators put CIA brass on the hot seat yesterday as evidence grew that the agency played a key role in the Iran arms-sale scandal.

CIA chief William Casey has claimed the agency's involvement was limited and that he knew only of "gossip" that proceeds of the sale went to Nicaraguan contras.

However, sources said Justice Dept. investigators believe CIA officials knew that as much as \$30 million was being funneled to anti-Communist rebel groups — and possibly controlled how it was diverted.

The Senate Intelligence Committee grilled CIA deputy director Robert Gates and three other agency officials on those suspicions yesterday.

Just what the witnesses said was kept secret.

However, committee chairman **David Durenburger** said investigators have evidence the Iran operation went far beyond ousted national security adviser **John Poindexter** and his deputy, Lt. Col. **Oliver North**.

"At the other end of everything they did was another person," he said.

Durenburger said the com-

mittee investigation is being expanded due to new information unearthed this week.

The panel, he said, intends to call in most of President Reagan's senior foreign policy advisers as well as dozens of other government officials over the next two weeks.

"The witness list has expanded. People are flying all over the country serving subpoenas for documents," he said.

Just how the Iran arms funds were diverted is not yet known.

However, sources close to the investigation say that some of the money apparently was "co-mingled" with an existing CIA account in Switzerland that was funding rebel groups in Afghanistan.

Some money from this "co-mingled" account, sources said, went to buy supplies for the contras.

If this proves true, the CIA could stand accused of violating the 1984 congressional ban on direct U.S. involvement with the contras.

In addition to the Swiss bank account, sources said CIA involvement in the affair includes the purchase of TOW anti-tank missiles and Hawk anti-aircraft missiles.

The weaponry was allegedly bought from the Pentagon for sale to Iran.

The CIA also is suspected of making arrangements for White House use of its special air charter service for at least two arms shipments.

Attorney General **Edwin Meese** soon is expected to raise questions of possible CIA law-breaking when he files his formal request for a special prosecutor in Federal Court here.

Documents accompanying Meese's request are expected to include statements that a number of laws have been broken by White House officials.

In other developments in the Iran arms scandal:

● North, who took the 5th amendment before the committee earlier this week, said he has a "straightforward willingness to tell the facts as I know them at the appropriate point."

● President Reagan said that he will allow his cabinet members to decide for themselves whether to invoke the 5th amendment if called to testify before the Senate committee.

He said he has given no thought to claiming executive privilege to prevent them from testifying.